

Start date	Interview date
TBC – August 2021	TBC – likely w/c 26 July 2021
Duration of role	Salary
200 hours	£9.50/hour
Working pattern	Number of roles available
Approximately 25 hours/week over 8 weeks Hours will be flexible Monday to Friday, expected to fit within 9am – 6pm but that which maximises contact with research participants.	4
Location	Deadline for applications
Remote working, but with the potential of field work in Bristol.	12midday, Thursday 15 July 2021
Eligibility	
To apply for the role of Research Assistant for this research, you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be a current undergraduate student in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law; OR • be a recent graduate (within six months of graduation) of an undergraduate degree in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law. <p>For further details, including a full list of eligible programmes, please visit our website.</p>	

1. Project overview

Voscur is the support and development agency for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in and around Bristol. Working with the University of Bristol, the collaboration will develop a number of in-depth studies on the impact of Covid-19 on the city. This will help the city as a whole develop a better understanding of how we responded to the pandemic, what we have learned and what we might do to take that learning forward.

After the successful recruitment of two students, we are looking to recruit four further Research Assistants to help us with this project.

Bristol's response to Covid-19 – A joint research project between Voscur and the University of Bristol

[Designing a New Social Reality](#), is recent key report produced by the Black South West Network here in Bristol, and its stakeholders include Voscur and Bristol City Council. It seeks to “analyse the impact of Covid-19 on the VCSE sector in Bristol in order to assess how to foster and embed greater community resilience in the new operating environment, and ultimately provide evidence for planning a thoroughly informed and strengthening VCSE sector recovery strategy that looks beyond Covid-19 and to the long-term future.”

While the above mentioned and similar reports show a great deal of time and sector-specific expertise has been deployed to look into individual areas, there has been no overall view of how Bristol – as a city and its voluntary sector organisations – responded and adapted to the Coronavirus pandemic. It is to this dimension that the proposed research seeks to address.

Working with the University of Bristol, Voscur and its VCSE members, we now have the opportunity to look in depth into a number of areas that have been profoundly impacted since March 2020. The next four study areas will be:

Topic: Digital inclusion

Study: How did the city adapt to working and studying at home? Where did the additional much needed technology come from, how was it distributed and was this a success? Who fell through the gaps? Were some children better catered for than others, and what can the city learn from this?

Expertise: Knowle West Media Centre, Bristol City Council, DigiLocal, Bristol schools

Topic: Volunteering

Study: Who volunteered during the pandemic, why, and how successfully? How were things different to before Covid? What did charities learn and what can be taken forward post-Covid?

Expertise: Can Do Bristol, individual charities, BS3 Community, Bristol's community hubs

Topic: The environment, wildlife and parks

Study: What lockdown meant for the environment and nature in the city; how people used parks and outdoor spaces for health and wellbeing.

Expertise: young people's organisations, Avon Wildlife Trust, Bristol City Council, city farms

Topic: Older people

Study: How lockdown impacted on services for older people in the city and how providers adapted. To research isolation, befriending, food security, activity, adapting to changing NHS availability.

Expertise: Age UK Bristol (and the Support Hub), Alive, Bristol City Council

The intention is to generate an evolving and cumulative series of in-depth reports of how the city of Bristol and its VCSE sector responded to and met the challenges of Covid-19 over 2020 and into 2021 and beyond. This is aimed at addressing two overarching research ends. First, to develop a shared and group-based learning experience for the research participants and the wider VCSE sector of how they dealt with Covid-19. Second, to similarly help shape this knowledge exchange across the city and therefore to influence the wider policy implications of what went well and what might we do differently in the future.

2. Role description

In collaboration with their two supervisors – one from Voscur and one from the University of Bristol School of Management – the Research Assistants are expected to develop:

- an appropriate research agenda and design
- take a lead role in conducting the resulting field work for their topic
- deliver a report that discusses their findings and collaboratively shape conclusions and recommendations for their topic

- and work with others within the research project in shaping group based reflections and emergent conclusions

Broadly speaking, we would expect the research period to cover eight weeks: 2 weeks of planning and preparation, 3/4 weeks of field work and 2/3 weeks of drafting discussion and conclusions. The research process will be one of collaboration with research participants and research supervisors from the University and Voscur.

3. Person specification

- Research experience – Having some experience of a social research programme would be beneficial but the roles are open to applicants who do not have to have a track record. Indeed, this role might be their first involvement in social research. More importantly, we are looking for Research Assistants who have a passion for getting involved in the research topics discussed above and a hunger to be part social change.
- From their degree coursework applicants must have an awareness of the range of social science research methods that might be deployed in this project. This knowledge should include an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of mainstream research methods that involve the design of questionnaires/surveys, focus groups and open-ended interview questions.
- Applicants should have strong communication skills in both interpersonal interactions and in writing.
- Applicants should be self-driven and well organised in getting through tasks and hitting deadlines.

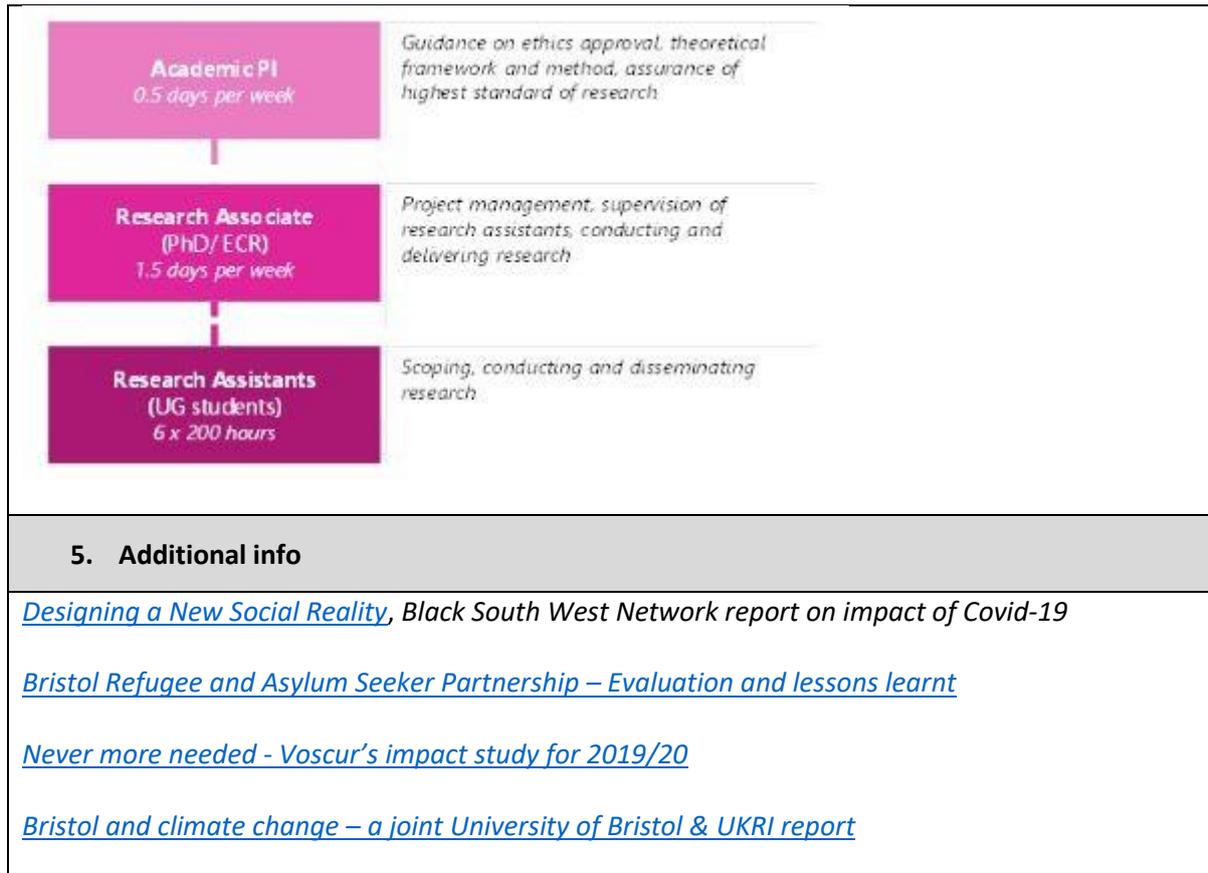
4. Overview of induction and ongoing support/supervision

Research Assistants will be supervised by Professor Martin Parker (Professor of Organisation Studies, School of Management) and Dr John McGoldrick (seconded and volunteer to Voscur).

Tom Burnett of Voscur will oversee the management, production, launch and publicity for this work. Voscur will also provide access to Bristol's voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Tom Burnett and Dr John McGoldrick will advise the Research Assistants on framing the research questions for each topic and provide guidance on process and standards.

Orientation guidance meetings will be provided by Tom Burnett and Dr John McGoldrick to brief the Research Assistants on the VCSE sector in Bristol and the background settings of the research topics. These meetings will also help the Research Assistants shape their research questions and the appropriate research designs that flow from them. They will also provide continuing support to the post holders throughout the research project, with regular meetings to assess progress.



For a detailed outline of the application process, tips for applying and links to application and interview support provided by the Careers Service see our [Bristol Model Research Assistant guidance document](#).

Any questions please contact the Professional Liaison Network – fssl-pln@bristol.ac.uk